

COMPASSION[®] CHURCH TRIPS RESOURCE GUIDE

We are committed to excellence in providing cross-cultural and relational experiences that lead to education, advocacy and sponsorship.

GO. EXPERIENCE. CONNECT.



YOUR GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL COMPASSION CHURCH TRIPS

Church Trips with Compassion are an exclusive opportunity designed to give ministry partners a close-up view of our work with the local church and children. Not only will a Church Trip allow ministry partners to see firsthand how children's lives are being transformed, but sponsors and travelers will also be able to build relationships with, learn from and encourage those who are part of the ministry that Compassion touches every day. We are excited about the opportunity to foster partnerships between our church-based Child Development Centers in our field countries and with our church partners state-side. As these partnerships develop, Compassion is pleased to facilitate trips to our field countries that will contribute to a long-term partnership and child sponsorship.

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CHURCH TRIPS FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

As you begin the journey of preparing to travel to the field on a Church Trip with Compassion, we are excited to share with our ministry partners these three Foundational Principles, as they are the pillars upon which we build the entire trip planning process, the execution of the trip itself, and life post-trip. We believe that as we follow these ideas to the best of our ability, we will honor God and steward well all aspects of the Church Trip experience.

1. CHURCH TRIPS EXIST TO ENHANCE THE MINISTRY'S MODEL OF PARTNERSHIP

Compassion defines partnership as “a collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship between Compassion and another entity for the purpose of releasing children from poverty in Jesus’ name beyond the capacity of either partner individually.” With Church Trips serving as only one component of your church’s partnership with Compassion, we invite you to see and experience how partnering together allows us to increasingly impact more children living in poverty than what either of us could do if working alone. [2 Corinthians 8:13-15]

2. CHURCH TRIPS ARE BASED ON HEALTHY POVERTY ALLEVIATION PRINCIPLES

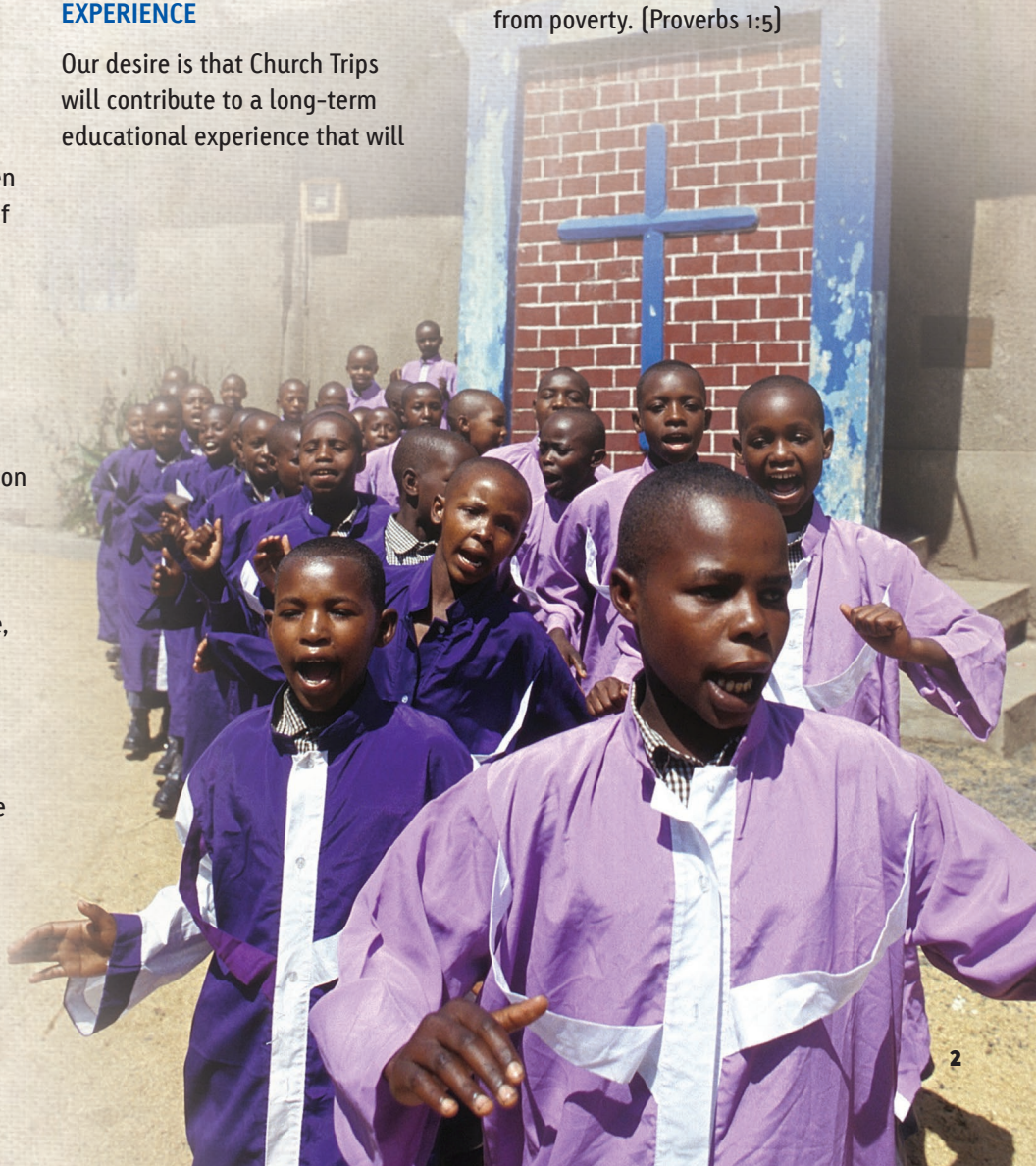
Taking a Church Trip with Compassion allows you to draw near to the impactful kingdom work that is happening within the context of physical poverty. As you participate, we want to make every effort to ensure that your brief presence will contribute to and not hinder the long-term local work that is taking place. As you experience the

incredible work that God is doing through Compassion and the local church, rest assured that we will design your team’s itinerary and plan for your time in-country to support the ongoing work that will continue long after your Church Trip has concluded. [Matthew 19:21]

3. CHURCH TRIPS ARE PART OF A LONG-TERM EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Our desire is that Church Trips will contribute to a long-term educational experience that will

take place before, during and after the trip. We seek to reveal and address poverty from a Biblical worldview, while also equipping everyone involved with healthy missional thinking and practices at home and overseas. As a result, individuals and churches will be further educated and equipped with ongoing ways to make a lasting impact in lives of children suffering from poverty. [Proverbs 1:5]



CHURCH TRIPS MISSION STATEMENT

"We are committed to excellence in providing cross cultural and relational experiences that lead to education, advocacy and sponsorship."

CROSS-CULTURAL

While traveling to your destination has become fairly quick and easy, relational, cultural, and even spiritual barriers must be handled with attentiveness and dignity when crossing cultures. We consider it both an honor and responsibility to approach cross-cultural ministry with sensitivity and excellence while avoiding any cultural faux-pas. Although your time overseas will be brief, it is our desire that teams be prepared and equipped with foundational cross-cultural intelligence and sensitivity.

RELATIONAL

Church Trips with Compassion are primarily focused on the Ministry of Presence. The most valuable way you and your team can participate in what God is doing through the local church and Compassion Child Development center is by offering friendship and relationship to those you will meet. A word of love and encouragement may go much further than any physical act of service. When we offer ourselves in relationship, we communicate respect and acknowledge that we see you, we love you, we support you and believe in what you are doing. By offering your presence, you are helping to celebrate and support local service and leadership.

One of the most powerful ways your presence will be used during the trip is by the interaction you will have with your Compassion sponsored child. To allow for this, Compassion has designed "Fun Day" as a special day incorporated into every trip, allowing sponsors to have uninterrupted time with their sponsored children. The children are brought to a park, the beach, or another public venue with a parent/guardian, child development center staff, and interpreter. During Fun Day, sponsors have the opportunity to get to know their sponsored children better, share a meal together, exchange gifts, and enjoy the venue arranged by Compassion.

EDUCATIONAL

A Church Trip is about more than a visit to the developing world. It is a springboard into a lifetime of ongoing transformational thinking and living [see 1 Corinthians 1:27].

Educate yourself about the country you will be visiting. Where is God at work there? In what ways is He working through Compassion's ministry? Reflecting on these questions will equip your team with insights as you come alongside local leadership. Additionally, this will provide a catalyst for ways you can continue as an advocate for children in poverty upon your return home. Compassion will provide you with a Trip Guidebook that can serve as a springboard into your trip preparation.

ADVOCACY

Building on what you'll have the opportunity to learn and experience pre-trip and during your time in country, our hope is that you will be inspired and better equipped to begin a lifestyle and life-long journey of advocating for children in need. Our desire is that participation in a Church Trip will create a stirring in travelers by helping answer the question, "What are you going to do now in response to what you have seen?" We know and celebrate that this response will look different for each individual and church! God's calling on Compassion is to offer opportunities to advocate primarily through child sponsorship. We desire for you to take practical steps to continue speaking out for the poor and actively participate in activities that will alleviate poverty. Additionally, our hope is that you would continue to support and stand behind local leaders, as they seek to identify solutions that will bring lasting change to their communities [see Luke 10:29].

SPONSORSHIP

Serving children living in poverty through the local church is at the heart of everything Compassion does. Sponsorship is the heartbeat of that heart. We want to deepen the sponsorship relationship between you and your sponsored child. If you do not already sponsor a child with Compassion, prayerfully consider sponsoring a child now, before you leave for your trip [see Isaiah 58:10].

SERVICE PROJECTS AND MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

During the trip, you may have an opportunity to contribute to a service project that will be identified by the local church based on their identified need. Remember that Compassion's ministry focuses on long-term, holistic child development. Your project will be more than a physical act. You'll be building relationships with those you meet. Take time to get to know each person, listen to their stories and pray for them. Also, remind your group that the most significant results from your trip will be intangible. **Your team can be very effective by sharing the love of Jesus and building Christ-centered relationships with children, parents, pastors and others in the community!**

RECRUITING AND BUILDING YOUR TEAM

Feel free to use recruiting methods that work best for your church. Your Trip Planner will provide an email with details that may be used in advertising. We suggest meeting with your team regularly to plan and pray together. Your trip planner can also offer suggestions.

AGE LIMITS

Due to the physical and emotional demands of a Church Trip, as well as for liability reasons, these trips are not designed for young children. Please note:

- The minimum age to travel on a Church Trip is 13 (sorry, no exceptions). Families with younger children (10-12) are encouraged to join a Compassion Sponsor Tour.
- Ages 13-15 can travel, but must be accompanied by their parent/legal guardian.
- Ages 16-17 can travel without their parent with a written release, but there must be one chaperone (age 21 or older) for every five minors.
- Age 18 and above is considered an adult.



SAFETY AND SECURITY

While there is always a certain risk associated with international travel, we make it a top priority to ensure travelers have the best possible experience. **Compassion has decades of experience leading international trips and we have an outstanding record for safety.** Because countries where we serve do sometimes face situations like natural disasters, crime, or terrorism, we monitor conditions carefully through travel safety vendors, along with Compassion's International Security Consultant Team and Field Staff. These parties work diligently to track the latest events around the world, in the event a trip plans ever need to be adjusted or cancelled. Please note each visitor is required to sign a Travel Release Form and Compassion is not responsible for any injuries or accidents that may occur during the visit. Also, each traveler is automatically enrolled in our international trip insurance coverage and registered with the State Department STEP Program.

AIRLINE ARRANGEMENTS

Every Compassion Church Trip has the benefit of utilizing group airfare contracts (12 or more travelers) arranged by our in-house travel agents. Our agents meticulously search for the best group contracts. Three months prior to the travel dates, the exact number of travelers are required. About a month and a half before the departure date, tickets will be electronically issued under each traveler's legal name. Travelers are invited to add corresponding frequent flyer numbers to their reservations.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL INSURANCE

Each person on a Church Trip is covered by Compassion's trip insurance for the duration of the trip. The policy covers a medical benefit for urgent and emergency care, medical evacuation and repatriation, security evacuation, and accidental death and dismemberment. The plan does not include trip cancellation/delay, lost or delayed baggage, or any continuing medical care after the trip. Your Trip Planner will provide more details.

FREQUENCY OF TRIPS

In order to promote healthy partnerships, Compassion recommends visiting a field country once every two years. This timeframe allows for deep relationships to be fostered while still allowing our local churches to focus on their ongoing ministry to children. Churches who desire to visit the field more frequently are encouraged to broaden their impact by alternating their visits between multiple Compassion Centers or even countries. Your Relationship Director will help offer guidance on frequency of trips.



CHILD PROTECTION AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

Compassion does everything within our power to protect children from abuse and exploitation. Therefore, a Background Check is required for all travelers 18 years and older.

TRAVEL AND MEDICAL RELEASE

Every traveler must complete and sign Compassion's Travel Release Form. In doing so, travelers acknowledge they understand the physical expectations for a Church Trip. In the event a traveler has a preexisting condition, he or she will be required to provide relevant information about the condition, treatments and medications. In this circumstance, the traveler may be required to complete a medical waiver signed by their physician.

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

Compassion understands that a trip may need to be canceled due to unforeseen circumstances. Travelers who cancel a trip may do so at any point in the planning process. Compassion will automatically cancel any reservations made, including accommodations and sponsor child visits. The Trip Planner may provide permission and instructions for a replacement traveler, if this is a feasible solution. However, within 30 days of the trip, the replacement traveler option will be unavailable. Your trip planner will use his or her discretion to determine the refund amount, based upon each circumstance and the following guidelines:

- More than four months [Before Registration Deadline] prior to departure, a traveler can withdraw from the trip without penalty.
- Less than four months [After Registration Deadline] and greater than 30 days [Final Payment Deadline] prior to a trip, all payments are refundable minus the \$300 deposit and any funds spent on pre-trip planning.
- Less than 30 days before a trip, Compassion reserves the right to retain all payments made by an individual traveler. [Within 30 days of a trip, most expenses have been allocated on reservation deposits, trip preparation and shared expenses, such as transport and hosting.]
- Airfare refunds are completely determined by the airline under contract. In most cases, the airline will only provide credit toward future travel, minus a cancellation fee. The Trip Planner will provide all pertinent details about the credit. If cash refunds are offered by the airline, Compassion will provide this amount in full.

Compassion does not provide cancellation insurance for trips. If you would like to purchase cancellation insurance, please let your Trip Planner know.



CHURCH TRIP PLANNING TIMELINE

US CHURCH PARTNER

- 1 year or more**
 - Church leadership meets and agrees to partner on a mission trip with Compassion. Dates are decided and sent to Compassion
- 8-10 months**
 - Trip objectives are identified and shared with Compassion
 - Promotion of the trip begins
- 4-6 months**
 - All travelers are committed to the trip
 - Initial deposits are collected
 - Trainings begin
 - Passport applications are submitted
- 2-4 months**
 - Final payments are made to the church from travelers
 - Trainings continue
- 0-2 months**
 - 30 days all logistics are set — no changes
- Post-trip**
 - Feedback submitted
 - Plan reunion party for 1 month and 6 months

COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL

- Trip is requested and approved with the field office
- Trip registration begins
- Flight contract reserved with airline
- Budget created and trip price established
- Trip proposal sent to US church
- Registration closes
- Child visit list is submitted
- Hotel, meal, and transportation reservations are made in-country
- Field staff visit target child development center to confirm details and identify ministry needs
- Final payments are made to church from travelers
- Trainings continue
- Tickets purchased
- Provides child visit costs, final payment received from church
- 30 Days all logistics are set — no changes.
- Feedback received from US church and Compassion child development center
- Talk with church leaders to strategize for next steps



SAMPLE ITINERARY

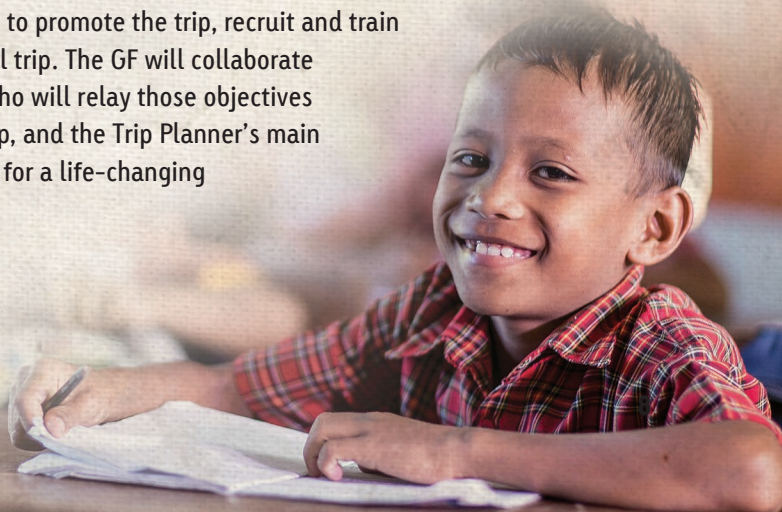
While each Church Trip is unique, here is an example of a typical schedule:

- DAY 1** International travel and arrival to field country
- DAY 2** Orientation, welcome and tour of the child development center and church, home visits
- DAY 3** Service opportunity (examples: VBS, light construction project with church, etc.)
- DAY 4** Worship service, fellowship with church and Compassion leadership
- DAY 5** Service opportunity continued at the Compassion child development center
- DAY 6** "Fun Day" with sponsored children
- DAY 7** Farewell at church, country office visit, final debriefing
- DAY 8** International travel, arrival to US

KEY PLAYERS

Introducing those who serve the Church Trip process:

- **Church Relationship Director/Manager or Account Manager** – These are the Compassion representatives who serve your church on an ongoing basis. The Relationship Director will guide you in exploring dates for your trip and making an official Church Trip request.
- **Trip Planner** – Once your Church Trip has been approved, the Church Relationship Director/Manager or Account Manager will introduce the Trip Planner to the point of contact at the church. The Trip Planner will then serve as the main point of contact throughout the trip planning process. Your Trip Planner also facilitates communication from your church to the field and vice versa.
- **Trip Administrator** – This person supports the administration of each travelers' online registration and ensures all information needed to travel has been received by Compassion. The Trip Administrator also makes sure each traveler is registered with the US Department of State prior to travel and provides guidance on visa applications, if required.
- **Compassion US Representative** – This person is hired and trained by Compassion to co-lead the trip with you. All teams are required to be accompanied by a Compassion US Representative. He or she is responsible for being the bridge between cultures and managing the flow of the itinerary, along with field staff. This person will assist your team in organizing activities and manage any crisis that might occur, with the aid of field staff. He or she will serve to protect the interests of Compassion while in country, and come alongside your church's leadership to make arrangements necessary to benefit the group. While many groups have a designated pastor or leader from the church to lead the team spiritually and functionally, our staff can assist in this role, if needed. The Compassion US Representative will be introduced to the church approximately one month prior to the trip dates by the trip planner and will usually meet the church at their international gateway city in the US.
- **Group Facilitator (GF)** – This is the title used by Compassion to refer to the main planning contact at the US Church Partner. This person's role is to promote the trip, recruit and train the team, and most often lead the team on the actual trip. The GF will collaborate on the objectives of your trip with the Trip Planner, who will relay those objectives to the field. The GF is critical to the success of the trip, and the Trip Planner's main role is to support the GF as he or she builds the team for a life-changing experience, in-country and beyond.



CHECK OUT THESE EXTRA RESOURCES

The following resources can help you prepare for your trip:

- “Helping without Hurting in Short-Term Missions” by Steve Corbett
- Rethinking Short-Term Missions by David Livermore
- Things No One Tells You About Going on Short Term Mission Trips

You can learn more about Compassion through these resources:

- “Just a Minute: In the Heart of a Child, One Moment...Can Last Forever” by Dr. Wess Stafford
- “Too Small to Ignore: Why the Least of These Matter Most” by Dr. Wess Stafford
- Compassion Ministry Philosophy Series (Compassion’s position on Church, Poverty, and Partnership — available through your trip planner)
- Poverty Tourism vs. Pilgrimage
- Does International Child Sponsorship Work? A Six-Country Study of Impacts on Adult Life Outcomes
- What is Poverty?
- Treading Lightly While Helping
- Want to Change the World? Sponsor a Child

Tap any underlined text to view the associated resource.

